

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 /075 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3482

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3392

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI MASS PFOR KS US

SUBJ: PARK VOICES STRONGER OPPOSITION TO WITHDRAWAL THAN BEFORE

REF: SEOUL 2585 (DTG 310654Z MAR 77)

1. WE FIND IT NOTABLE THAT IN HIS ON THE RECORD APRIL 22, STATEMENTS TO HIGH RANKING UPI AND AGENCE FRANCE PRESS OFFICERS, WHICH HAVE BEEN CARRIED BY WIRE SERVICES AND WERE GIVEN MAJOR FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN ROK PRESS, PRESIDENT PARK MADE IT CONSIDERABLY CLEARER THAN BEFORE THAT HE WOULD PREFER U.S. TROOPS TO STAY IN KOREA IN ORDER TO DETER MISCALCULATIONS BY THE NORTH AND HELP CONTAIN THE SOVIET UNION. PARK REPORTEDLY SAID HE WOULD NOT ASK OUR TROOPS TO STAY BUT POINTED OUT DIVISION'S PRESENCE HAD PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE IN CONTEXT GLOBAL U.S. STRATEGY. HE CONCLUDED THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY U.S. TROOPS BEING TAKEN OUT.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, PARK REAFFIRMED TO UPI AND AFP HIS EARLIER STATEMENTS ABOUT ROK'S RELATIVE STRENGTH VIS A VIS NORTH AND ABILITY TO CARRY ON DESPITE U.S. MOVE. HE TRIED TO SPELL OUT IN MORE DETAILED FASHION THAN PREVIOUSLY, JUST HOW THE SOUTH'S
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FORCES BALANCED THE NORTH'S, EXAGGERATING IN A FEW CASES THE ACTUAL STRENGTH OF THE SOUTH.

3. NEW EMPHASIS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF U.S. TROOPS STAYING AND THE MORE DETAILED, I.E. SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE AND EXAGGERATED RATIONALE FOR CLAIMING ABILITY TO GO IT ALONE APPEAR TO INDICATE PARK HAS CONCLUDED EARLIER STATEMENTS, EVEN ONE AT MILITARY ACADEMY

(REFTEL), WERE A BIT TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT OF POPULAR AND INTELLECTUAL CONCERN AND OPPOSITION TO WITHDRAWAL. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, AND AS SEPTTEL'S ANALYSIS OF PRESS INFERS, POPULAR OPPOSITION TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL REMAINS DEEP AND STRONG. MOREOVER, WE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN HEARING FROM NUMBER OF WELL INFORMED OBSERVERS THAT PRESIDENT'S CONFIDENT POSITION ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL IS NOT ACCEPTED, AT LEAST AS YET.

4. WE DO NOT CONCLUDE THAT PARK STATEMENT IS A TURNABOUT AND THAT HE NOW MEANS TO MAKE STRONG PITCH TO U.S. FOR TROOPS PRESENCE. IT SEEMS RATHER A TACTICAL REPOSITIONING FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES. FINDING HIMSELF TOO DIVORCED FROM PUBLIC OPPOSITION AND SKEPTICISM OF THE AMERICAN MOVE, HE SEEMS NOW TO BE SAYING TO HIS PEOPLE: I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE THAN YOU; IN FACT I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE; BUT WE HAVE TO FACE REALITIES; IF THE AMERICANS ARE DETERMINED TO GO WE MUST CARRY ON AS BEST WE CAN; AND WE CAN DO THE JOB.

5. THIS MAY PROVE TO BE A SOMEWHAT MORE ACCEPTABLE POSITION PUBLICLY, BUT WE DOUBT IT WILL MAKE THE WITHDRAWAL ANY MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLIC IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE AND PARK'S EXAGGERATION OF ROK'S FORCES, DEFENSE INDUSTRY CAPABILITY, AND ABILITY TO DEFEND AGAINST NORTH IS LIABLE TO BE TREATED BY MANY WITH CONTINUING SKEPTICISM.

6. AFP MAN'S TRANSCRIPT FROM SHORTHAND NOTES OF STATEMENT BEING POUCHED TO EA/K.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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